

Amendments to the claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A shell casing for enclosing a tape measure comprising:

a first shell;

a second shell;

an attachment element that attaches said first shell to said second shell thereby enclosing the tape measure, said casing having a bottom surface that rests on an object to be measured and having a vertical recess at its front portion;

an indicator window located ~~proximate to said tape measure~~ in the vertical recess and having an indication mark positioned to be in line with measurement increments arranged on said tape measure;

a marker housing integrally formed with said casing and disposed proximate the vertical recess, and receiving a marker attached to at least one of said shells and wherein the marker is aligned with the indication mark in the said indicator window, and the marker housing and the marker are positioned above the bottom surface of said casing so as to allow marking of an the object at the measurement increment that is in line with the indication mark using one and only one hand.

2. (Currently Amended) The shell casing for enclosing the tape measure of Claim 1 ~~further comprising~~ wherein:

the marker is a blade ~~connected to at least one of said shells and~~ and is aligned with the indication mark.

3. (Currently Amended) The shell casing for enclosing the tape measure of Claim 1 ~~further comprising~~ wherein:

the marker is a retractable blade received in said marker housing ~~molded into at least one of said shells wherein said retractable blade is molded flush within said shell.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The shell casing for enclosing the tape measure of Claim 2 wherein the marker is a lead pencil received in said marker housing ~~connected to at least one of said shells.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The shell casing for enclosing the tape measure of Claim 2 wherein the marker is a retractable lead pencil received in said marker housing ~~molded into at least one of said shells wherein said retractable lead pencil is molded flush within said shell.~~

6. (Currently Amended) A combination tool comprising:

a tape measure in a case, said case having a bottom surface that rests on an object to be measured and having a vertical recess at its front portion;

an indicator window located ~~proximate to said case~~ in the vertical recess and having an indication mark positioned to be in line with measurement increments arranged on said tape measure; and

a retractable cutting blade housing integrally formed with said case and disposed proximate the vertical recess and receiving a retractable cutting blade ~~located inside said case and wherein the cutting blade is~~ aligned with the indication mark in the window so as to allow marking of or making of a cut on ~~an~~ the object at the measurement increment that is in line with the indication mark using one and only one hand.

7. (Currently Amended) A combination tool comprising:

a tape measure in a case, said case having a bottom surface that rests on an object to be measured and having a vertical recess at its front portion; and

an indicator window located ~~proximate to said case~~ in the vertical recess and having an indication mark positioned to be in line with measurement increments arranged on said tape measure; and

a marker housing integrally formed with said case and disposed proximate the vertical recess, and receiving a marker attached to said case and wherein said marker is aligned with the indication mark in the window and said marker is positioned above the

bottom surface of said case prior to marking so as to allow marking of ~~an~~ the object at the measurement increment that is in line with the indication mark using one and only one hand.

8. (Previously Presented) The combination tool of Claim 6 wherein:

said tape measure includes a nail hole at its exposed end.

9. (Previously Presented) The combination tool of Claim 7 wherein:

said marker is adapted to use interchangeable leads or limestone.

10. (Currently Amended) The combination tool of Claim 7 wherein:

said marker is a mechanical lead pencil ~~molded into said case in a flush manner~~ received in said marker housing.

11. (Previously Presented) The combination tool of Claim 7 wherein said indicator window is a clear indicator window and said indication mark includes an index line positioned to be in line with said measurement increments.

12-15. (Cancelled)

16. (New) The combination tool according to claim 7, wherein said marker housing is a first marker housing, further comprising a second marker housing integrally formed with said case, wherein said first and second marker housings are disposed on opposite sides of said indicator window.

17. (New) The combination tool according to claim 16, wherein said first marker housing is adapted to receive a blade and said second marker housing is adapted to receive a pencil or a pen.